Missions and International Peace

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Christianity is a world religion. It carries the weight of the world on its shoulders and the horizon of the world in its eyes. It is a Good Shepherd religion, and its heart has no rest so long as a solitary sheep is out of the fold. As it goes on its way it picks up, one after another, the continents, the big ones and the little ones, and seeks diligently for all the islands of the sea. It wants to whisper something to them. It wants to tell them God is love.

From the nature of Christianity the Christian church becomes an international institution. Her field is the world. You never see the church at her best unless she is playing a part on a stage as wide as the planet. She never gives indubitable evidence of her divine origin until she sets to work at an immeasurable and impossible task. When you see her working in a limited field, petty in spirit and narrow in aim, pottering about things which are paltry, you wonder if this is the institution which was to come, or whether the world had better look for another. But when you see her laying her hands on the brows of nations, pouring fresh vigor into the veins of empires that were old when Jesus died on the cross, laying hold of backward and friendless races, and planting their feet on the steep and difficult ascent up which the leaders of humanity are making their way, there is borne in upon you the conviction that this is none other than the servant of the Most High God, and that her commission was written in heaven.

The Christian church is irrevocably committed to the cause of peace. Her commission runs after this fashion: "Go, disciple the nations" — put the nations all to school, "baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost," into the character of the God of love, "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I command you"; for

instance: "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." "Love one another even as I have loved you." "One is your Master, and all ye are brethren." "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God." "Love your enemies, pray for them that persecute you." "Put up your sword." "When you pray, say, Our Father." The work of the church is to tie up the continents and the islands, the kingdoms and empires and republics in those two heavenly teachings, the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man. Wherever she goes she proclaims that "God has made of one all the nations of the earth to dwell together," and that "Christ has broken down the middle wall of partition."

All these things are written in a book. A Christian is a man of a book. He never goes anywhere without his book. This book has two chapters: the first chapter contains a picture of a bonfire in which the boots of war and the garments rolled in blood are being consumed to ashes, and in the light of that fire we catch glimpses of a world in which all the instruments of slaughter have been transformed into implements for the feeding and nourishing of mankind. The second chapter of the book contains simply the portrait of a man, a man whom all the world has come to call the Prince of Peace. Under the portrait an old tradition is written to the effect that on the night on which this man was born the skies became musical with voices of goodwill. The story of the book is a loving heaven, and the mission of the book is to make a loving earth.

Wherever the church goes she carries in her hand a sacrament, the sacrament of the bread and the wine. The bread and the wine symbolize the broken body and the poured out blood of the Prince of Peace. And wherever the sacrament is administered, the church keeps repeating the words of Jesus: "Unless you eat my flesh and drink my blood, you have no life in you." The Prince of Peace lives in and works through his followers.

The church carries but one banner and upon that banner there is inscribed but one figure — the figure of the cross. The cross is the symbol of tenderness and compassion, of brotherliness and self-sacrificing love. If a Christian at home or abroad ever loses the temper of

conciliation, or ever forgets the vocabulary of goodwill, or ever comes to think that force is mightier after all in the solution of world problems than love, he forgets what spirit he is of.

The first great Christian missionary always considered himself a peacemaker. Paul lived in a world that bowed low before the god of war. In whatever direction he cast his eyes he saw moving masses of soldiers. Whereever he went he saw fortresses and citadels, forts and fortifications. The language of the camp and the barracks was always in his ears. The whole world seemed to have been made for the soldier. Those magnificent Roman roads running out from the banks of the Tiber to the ends of the earth had all been thrown up by Roman genius and paid for with Roman gold for the use of the Roman legionaries. All the triumphal arches had been built for conquering generals, and the long lines of marble statues imaged the faces of the men who had soaked the earth with blood. "Blessed are the war makers, for they are the sons of the mighty," was written across the sky under which the first missionary did his work.

But out of this world filled with military sights and sounds and memories there came to this missionary a beautiful vision, a vision of a new army and a new commander and a new cause and a new triumph. Paul said that he himself was a soldier, and that all his fellow-Christians were comrades in a great campaign. He said to himself: "These roads have been created for the use of us Christian soldiers and we will march along them to the ends of the earth, not in the boots of war, but in the sandals of peace. We will pull down the strongholds, but the weapons of our warfare are not carnal. We will lead nations into captivity, but they shall be captives of the Lord of Love." And as the great vision of a mighty army loyal to Jesus of Nazareth breaks upon him, he cries out to men everywhere: "Put on the whole armor of God, fasten your belt, adjust your breastplate, put on your helmet, take up your shield, grasp your sword — let us endure hardness as good soldiers of Christ." Often would he meditate upon a beautiful picture preserved in one of the old prophetic writings: "How beautiful on the mountain are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace." The picture was painted

in an age harrassed and tortured by war. Carnage followed carnage. Horror trod on the heels of horror. Men lived in a state of constant alarm. Wistful eyes were ever turned toward the horizon, fearful of seeing the glittering points of advancing spears. And if perchance no spears appeared, and a messenger came running, announcing that the fires of enmity were extinguished and that the day of peace had come, the human heart knew a rapture which the tongue could not tell. Paul, gazing on that painting, exclaims: "That is a picture of the Christian missionary. How beautiful on the mountain are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace. Look at him coming down over the ramparts and battlements of Cæsar, through the long lines of javelins and spears, into the midst of the enginery of battle, announcing to the nations of the earth that the heart of the universe is love and that war is contrary to the nature and will of the Eternal." Only the other day some one said that what the world now needs is a moral equivalent of war. Paul found the equivalent nineteen centuries ago.

The picture of the missionary in the first century is a good picture of the missionary in the twentieth, for the world still lies in bondage to the god of war. Christendom bristles with guns. Millions of men are under arms. Nations look with terror out on the sea, counting anxiously the number of Dreadnaughts being launched by their enterprising neighbors. Every breeze wafted landward from the sea carries the reverberations of guns engaged in target practice, where men are perfecting themselves in the art of sinking and drowning a thousand men at once. The whole world is deluged with a flood of war talk. The first man you meet is likely to tell you of the coming war between England and Germany. It may be postponed for a season, but soon or late it is bound to come. That England and Germany shall fight for the supremacy of the world is decreed by fate, and from this decree there is no escape, so this confident prophet declares. The next man will tell you about the coming conflict between the Anglo-Saxon and the Slav. The enmity is deep seated and can be washed out only in blood. The fire is smoldering for the present, but by and by it will break out in a conflagration which will light up the world. Still another man is eager to

tell you about the war which is impending between the Slav and the Japanese. He assures you that the present peace is only a hastily patched-up truce, and that already preparations are under way for the opening of a war immeasurably longer and bloodier than the war which only recently was ended. The next man is full of the idea of the coming war between Japan and the United States. This war is also inevitable. The mastery of the Pacific has not yet been awarded, and it can be awarded only by the god of war. It is impossible, so this man says, for Japan and the United States to live at peace with the Pacific between them until one or the other has been humiliated and broken. The last man you meet has still farther reaching eyes. He sees the conflict which is coming between the white man and the colored man, the man of the West and the man of the East. The Orient and the Occident will some day come together with a clash which will cause the very globe to quiver. This talk of war is flowing in a slimy, defiling stream around the world. Two thousand years after the death of Jesus Christian nations are thinking of war, talking of war, writing of war, planning for war, pouring out their treasures in preparations for war. In a world so crowded with military sights and sounds, how beautiful on the mountain are the feet of him who comes to say to us, "Let us have peace." See him coming down over the ramparts and battlements, through the long lines of bayonets and guns, standing in the very midst of the enginery of slaughter, saying on behalf of the world's redeemer: "Peace be unto you. My peace give I unto you." You never appreciate the stature of the Christian missionary or catch his international significance until you see him projected against a world groaning under the intolerable weight of the paraphernalia and accoutrements of war.

When has the missionary been so much needed as now? The points of contact between nations have been indefinitely multiplied and every point of contact is a possible area of friction. Science and invention have converted the world into a neighborhood, but they have no power to transform it into a brotherhood. A neighborhood which is not dominated by the spirit of brotherliness is likely to reproduce certain features of Gehenna. The ends of the earth have been brought together and

their is danger of them becoming tangled. The oceans have dwindled into brooks and the barriers have been burned away. Isolation is no longer possible for any people. We are bound to touch one another's elbows and there is a chance of our stepping on one another's toes. It is a commercial age and the commercial spirit is alert and aggressive. The trader is abroad. He cannot be kept at home. He is seeking new markets in every land. He is indefatigable. He is bold. Commerce means competition. Competition is the mother of envy, jealousy, hatred and strife. The trader is not always the highest representative of his nation. He represents only a part of the national character. Certain instincts and impulses work mightily in him, the instinct to get, the impulse to acquire. We need to place by his side in all the commercial centres of the world the Christian missionary, the man who represents his nation on another side, the man in which the instinct to do good is mighty and who is dominated by the impulse to give. These altruistic instincts and impulses are also a part of the character of the nations of the West, and the Orient will never know the Occident until by the side of the trader there stands the messenger of the Son of God.

This is also a pleasure-loving age. One of the most fascinating forms of pleasure is travel. Tens of thousands of men and women are traveling constantly round the planet. In all the capitals of the world representatives of a score of nations meet and mingle. The traveler does not always represent his nation at its best. Some men are not so good abroad as they are at home. Men who are honorable at home are sometimes not even respectable abroad. Travelers are often snobbish, insolent, exasperating to the people of the country through which they journey. We never like people who differ widely from us. They are thorns in our flesh and we are thorns to them. The pleasure seeker can by his conduct plant in foreign communities seeds which will later on bring forth harvests of misunderstanding, hate and death. By the side of the traveler we must place the Christian missionary, the man who recognizes the supremacy not of pleasure, but of duty, who feels the force of moral obligations, and whose whole life is an exhibition of fine fidelity to a sacred trust. The pleasure seeker does not represent

that which is deepest and finest in the people of the West. The Orient will certainly misunderstand us unless by the side of the man who goes abroad to get there stands the man who leaves his home in order that he may give, and by the side of the man intent on pleasure there stands the man who in obedience to the law of love is ready to lay down his life for others. The man who represents what is truest and noblest in his nation's heart is a peacemaker wherever he goes, and is extending the boundaries of the empire of fraternity and goodwill.

This, then, is the supreme work of the missionary. He is a mediator between the Occident and the Orient, between the North and the tropics. He stands between two worlds and mediates between them. When one part of the world threatens with injustice another part, the missionary intercedes. When separated sections misunderstand each other and prepare to strike each other, the missionary interposes, saying, "Come now, let us reason together." He is an international interpreter. He takes the best things of one nation and shows them to another nation. If there be any virtue or any praise, he brings them to the attention of those who are ignorant of them or likely to ignore them. One might define a Christian missionary as an international interpreter of the heart of God and the heart of man. He is a destroyer of things which ought to be destroyed. He tears down the middle wall of partition. This is a wall that dynamite cannot blow over. Lyddite shells cannot be shot through it. The sharpest instruments of war can make no impression on it. It can be torn down only by the disciples of Christ. Merchants cannot buy their way through it with gold; science has no alchemy sufficiently subtle to penetrate. It falls before the attack of the disciples of the Prince of Peace.

The missionary is building a temper. Wars come out of tempers, not out of circumstances. Two men in good humor will not fight about anything; two men in a bad humor will fight about everything. As with individuals, so with nations. The Christian missionary is building a temper out of which the thunders and lightnings of war do not come.

He is the world's peacemaker. "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God." He is preparing the way for a world-wide Pentecost.

For a hundred years missionaries have been working on language. They have caught vibrations out of the air and reduced them to written speech. They have laid their hands on the wild dialects of semi-civilized tribes and reduced them to the restraints and proprieties of grammar. They have collected words out of the home and the shop and the street, out of the pages of vast literatures, and massed them in great dictionaries, exhibiting a patience in the presence of which the heart is awed, because it suggests the patience that is infinite. The story of love is being translated from one language to another, from one dialect to another, so preparing the world for the glorious day when every man shall hear the good news of God in the language in which he was born.

It is when we look at the missionary from this standpoint that we come to realize his international significance. We see that he is a national protector, he is a sort of fortification. It may be that some day we shall look upon missionaries as so many battleships, armored cruisers, torpedo boats, and torpedo-boat destroyers. The nations just now are in a fury of self-defense. As a nation we are following the fashion. We have fortified our chief cities on the Atlantic and on the Pacific. We have fortified Hawaii, and we have fortified the Philippines, and now word has gone out that we must fortify the Panama Canal, lest some sneak thief picks it up and makes off with it. The leading Christian nations have battleships in order to protect themselves against their neighbors. Every now and then we are reminded that we have one hundred and sixteen billions of national wealth and that we need a colossal navy in order to keep it safe. Without battleships we should be at the mercy of anybody and everybody who might lug off our treasures. A navy therefore is national insurance. What is one hundred and forty million dollars every year for the navy, or twice that sum, if only by that outlay we make our national possessions safe. This is the argument, and to many it seems conclusive. But surely the good God must have provided some simpler and easier way. Spending tens of millions of dollars on fortifications aud hundreds of millions on battleships is only one way of protecting a nation. Another way is to create all around it areas of goodwill. One way is to

multiply guns, and another way is to multiply friends. A man may protect himself against his neighbor by casing himself in armor so thick that his neighbor cannot shoot through it, but he can also protect himself by converting his neighbor into a friend. Friendship is not so expensive as steel armor. Missionaries are peacemakers who go abroad to scatter and sink all the fleets of misunderstanding, suspicion and ill-will. Money spent on missions is a form of national insurance.

We have spent, so the experts say, one billion dollars on the Philippines. It is a wise expenditure of money, so many think, because in those islands we have a place on which to set our foot when it comes time to speak persuasively in the great crises which are certain to arise in the development of the distant East. But islands made of rock and sand are not the only islands on which a nation can plant its feet. I can conceive of other islands, living islands scattered over the vast ocean of Eastern life, islands made up of human beings, on whose hearts we might rest in these great crises which are sure to come. I can conceive of a group of islands made up of men and women who were healed in our hospitals; another group made of men and women educated in our schools; another composed of men and women baptized into the name of Jesus in our churches. This archipelago of living islands would be a more solid foundation on which to rest our weight than the islands on which we have spent our billion dollars; for if the day should come when international relations were strained to the breaking point, and when all the heavens were full of thunder, the fortifications which we have built and the guns which we have mounted would only look out glum and sullen across the distressing situation. And if the guns spoke at all they could only speak in syllables of destructive fire, whereas the living islands would all break into voice, and plead trumpet tongued against the threatened baptism of blood and death. One group of islands would say: "Oh, government, do not make war upon America. It was Americans who taught us the elements of Western learning." Another group would cry: "Do not shoot down American young men! They healed our sons and daughters; they brought our babies back from the jaws of death. Do not kill them." Still another group would shout: "Do not burn American cities, for it was Americans

who showed us the beauty of forgiveness, who revealed to us the loveliness of love." These are the islands on which this republic could safely stand in the most furious tempest which shall ever sweep across the world.

It was a keen-eyed prophet of the Lord who said long ago that God had still more light to break forth from His holy word. There can be no doubt that He has still more light to break forth from this missionary enterprise. Ever since we began to carry the gospel to non-Christian lands, fresh light has been breaking on our path, and, in the light which is sure to stream upon us in the coming century, we are certain to see many things which are now hidden from the eyes of millions. We are going to see the horrors of an armed peace. All Christendom realizes the horrors of war. She does not know yet the horrors of a peace which is prepared for war. But when we once see distinctly the magnitude of the work which Christ has given us to do, when we take in the fact that there are one hundred and ten million human beings who, two thousand years after the death of Jesus, have never yet seen a Christian teacher or preacher or physician, and that there are other hundreds of millions who have only been imperfectly shepherded, and scarcely instructed even in the rudiments of the Christian faith, when it once dawns upon us that this work is going to demand not a few thousand of workers, but tens and hundreds of thousands of them, we are going to ask: "Where are the men? How does it happen that we have so few men to preach the gospel of love to the non-Christian world?" And when we make diligent search we shall find that four hundred thousand men are in the navies of the so-called Christian nations. Christendom can afford only sixteen thousand men and women to proclaim the unsearchable riches of Christ, but she can afford to put four hundred thousand men on her fighting ships, waiting for a war which may never come. Great Britain has one hundred thousand men on her ships of war. She can spare less than eight thousand men and women to preach the gospel in non-Christian lands. The United States has already over forty thousand men in her navy, and we cannot spare even six thousand men and women to publish abroad the good news of God. We have to-day twelve thousand five hundred soldiers in the Philippines, and all of the American churches put

together cannot send more than ninety-two men and women to represent Christ in those islands.

When we once fairly face the task which Christ has given us to do, we are going to see that it will cost us not a few million dollars, but hundreds of millions and billions of dollars. We are going to ask, Where is our money going? How does it happen we have so little money? On investigation we shall find that nearly six hundred million dollars of the money of Christendom is going every year into the support of the navies, while only twenty-four million dollars is given to missions. It will flash upon us some day like a gleam of light from the judgment throne that we are spending twenty-five times as much every year for our ships of war as we are for the extension in distant lands of that Kingdom which is an eternal Kingdom and for whose coming we daily pray. We have spent more on our last six battleships than the twenty-five leading universities and colleges of New England have been able to accumulate in their endowments by industry and sacrifice in two hundred and seventy-five years.

The light which will break forth from our missionary labors is going to light up the hollowness of the mischief-making adage, "In time of peace prepare for war." This is an adage of a pagan age and bears in its body the marks of Cæsar. It was born in a world in which every foreigner was an enemy and every stranger a foe; when throughout the world it was might which made right, and no one had ever seen the Prince of Glory. But when the leading nations of the Western world are counted Christian, and their rulers partake of the Lord's Supper, and the majority of their statesmen have been baptized into the blessed name, and the majority of influential voters have sworn allegiance to the Prince of Peace, to go on everlastingly repeating that old pagan adage is to blaspheme the name of Jesus and to block the progress of the world.

Our missionary work is also going to throw light upon the cardinal obstacle to the progress of world-evangelization. The only obstacle that blocks the cause of missions is the conduct of Christendom. Christ has said, "By their fruits you shall know them"; and Japan and China and India are all ready to judge us in that way. The most conspicuous fruit that grows on the Western

tree is a twelve-inch gun. That can be seen a longer distance than a New Testament. Delegations of noblemen and princes from the distant East, when they come to visit us, do not investigate our churches to find out our methods of preaching the gospel of love; they are more interested in the manufacture of guns, and order some just like our own. If two deacons representing two prominent churches in any American city should begin some day to weight themselves down with bowie-knives and revolvers, each man adding to his collection each year a deadly weapon of the latest fashion, and if each succeeding purchase were exploited in all the newspapers, not only of that city, but of all the cities in the land, the conduct of those two deacons would nullify the message that came from the pulpits of those two churches. And when two so-called Christian nations weight themselves down with armor and anxiously number their battleships, counting up the number of their lyddite shells, and when every movement of each nation is blazoned in all the papers of the world, their conduct subtracts from the penetrating power of the message which is being proclaimed by every Christian preacher throughout the world.

The light will some day become so intense that the Christian church will be able to see what is her duty. Who knows but that some day a National Council may find its tongue and dare say something on this great question — the very greatest question in all the world! It may be that if it is not a National Council, it will be a General Assembly, or a General Synod, or a General Convention which will rush into the arena where the statesmen are formulating their policies of international procedure, and will cry out, "I beg you go no further in this business." If the Christian church does not speak, who is going to speak? How can you expect Washington city to lead the way if the church remains dumb? America can lead as no other nation is able to lead because her entanglements are fewer and her traditions inspire her to travel the high and noble way. Some day the church is bound to grapple with this question. You cannot any more send tens of thousands of men out upon the sea to spend day after day and week after week shooting costly metal into the water, while thousands of human beings are starving on the land, and escape the slow

traveling, but terrible retribution of a God who is just, than a nation can manacle the limbs of the black man without washing out its sin in blood. This vision of the missionary task is going to open the eyes of the church to the wickedness of this incessant playing with the idea of war. There are sins of such fierce malignity that even to roll them in the mind brings the soul under the dark and devastating energy of their infernal power. So long as Christian nations think of war, prepare for war, plan for war, pour out their treasures to make themselves terrible in war, fill their papers and magazines with pictures of the deadliest instruments of war, spend two billion five hundred million dollars every year upon their armies and their navies, so long will the heart of Christendom be cold to the appeal of Jesus, and the hand of Christendom be paralyzed in its effort to accomplish the work which Christ has given us to do.

There have been three historic scourges, famine, pestilence and war. Commerce has slain the first. With her ships and money she has made it impossible for vast populations to starve to death. Pestilence has been overcome by science. With her antitoxines she has strangled the deadliest of the bacilli, and a dozen historic pestilences lie dead at her feet. The last enemy is war. Who will say to war: "Where is thy sting, O war? Where is thy victory?" Commerce cannot kill it. As Richard Cobden used to say, "Commerce is dangerous." Science cannot kill it. The war bacillus is beyond the reach of her most potent antitoxine. If left to herself, science only whets the sword to a sharper edge. Who, then, is going to kill war? Christianity can kill it. Christianity must kill it. Christianity will kill it. It will do it by Christians bearing witness to the Prince of Peace in Jerusalem, in Judea, in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth.